161 and a few plateaus of small extent which are the only spots suited to
311 farming and, in consequence, suited to settlements by human groups.

The uneven disposition of the country is the first cause of the low population density. It is not the only one.

161 For more than a century the Hôs and the Siamese have taken
175 turns in sacking the country, especially the northern part. Their methods differed, but the final result was the same. The former
727 massacred the inhabitants after burning the villages, and forced those who had escaped famine and torture to go and settle in another
648 region. The Siamese proceeded in a more methodical fashion, and depopulated the [125] land by making the inhabitants, livestock and elephants cross over to the right bank of the Mékong and oftentimes then taking them as far as the valley of the Ménam.

Fortunately this state of affairs, which prevailed when we took possession of Laos, is far from being immutable and there is every hope that the causes which gave birth to this forced departure will never again occur. The French occupation has safeguarded the population against the return of the old invasions, and in the same way the equity and justice of our administration make it possible for the natives to count on interior tranquillity and on the products of their labor.

Great efforts have also been made by our consuls in Siam and our administrators in Laos towards repopulating the country, and appreciable results have already been achieved in this direction. Thus by virtue of the agreement appended to the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 3, 1893, two thousand families including a minimum of eight thousand individuals of both sexes and a great deal of livestock who had previously been taken to Siam were able to return and settle on the left bank of the Mékong, the land of their origin.

• 168 Nothing, moreover, would stand in the way of an appeal to the other parts of Indo-China to repopulate Laos. The deltas, for example, are overflowing with people and their industrious population is so dense that the part of the land which is cultivable is by far too limited for each individual.

By offering these people a few advantages, especially in the beginning, it would be easy to attract them to Laos. By dint of hard work they would doubtless find existence comparatively easy there instead of being reduced, as they are today in certain regions, to a difficult struggle for survival.

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At the present time labor is what is needed to place under cultivation the land which is still lying fallow. Indeed, scarcely 30,000 square kilometers are cultivated out of the 80,000 which could be used. Once placed under cultivation these 50,000 square kilometers (1) could support from [126] 500,000 to 600,000 new inhabitants,

(1) About 15,000 square kilometers in northern Laos and 35,000 in southern Laos.

at the rate of ten or twelve inhabitants per square kilometer.

## 2. RACES

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The population of Laos can be divided into four large distinct categories. These are:

1. The Thais, that is to say, all the people who speak, write or understand the Thai language with a few slight differences either in pronunciation, the construction of words, orthography or writing. This race is subdivided into several types or varieties which are: The Laotians (or Lao or Phou-Lao) (1).

(1) We have created the word Laotian by derivation to designate the inhabitants of Laos in general, but in reality there is one variety of the Thai family, the most numerous one moreover, which bears the name Lao or Phou-Lao. The whole of the region included in the Mékong basin above Cambodia and in the basin of the Upper Ménam is called Muong-Lao, Xieng-Lao, or land inhabited by the Phou-Lao.

The Phou-Thais.
The Khao-Thais.
The Dam-Thais.
The Deng-Thais.
The Neua-Thais.
The Phou-Eunes.
The Youns.
The Lus.